



Factsheet: Health Dangers of Wading in Flood Waters

Flood waters and standing waters may not be safe. The water can have organisms that can make people sick. The water can also hide objects that could cause injuries. People should avoid contact with floodwater because there may be raw sewage and other chemicals in the water.

Recommendations if you have been in floodwaters for a long period of time:

- When cleaning up after a flood, wash hands with soap and water before eating and after handling floodwater-contaminated items.
- Do not drink floodwater or eat food that was been in contact with floodwaters.
- Wash clothes that have been in floodwaters immediately.
- If floodwater gets in your eyes, flush your eyes with clean, cool water.
- Do not let children play in floodwater or with toys that have been in floodwater. Clean toys with a solution of one cup bleach to five gallons of water.
- Drain standing water in and around your home to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.
- Protect yourself from mosquitoes by wearing insect repellent containing DEET.
- Keep open wounds as clean as possible by washing with soap and water.
- People with puncture wounds or cuts exposed to floodwater could be at risk of contracting Tetanus. It is recommended you get a Tetanus vaccination if you have never been vaccinated against Tetanus; do not remember the last time you were vaccinated; if it has been more than 5 years since your last vaccination.

Contact a Physician immediately and tell them you have been in floodwaters if:

- You develop gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, or fever
- You have long period of eye redness or eye irritation, pain, sensitivity to light, sudden or blurred vision, or discharge
- Any wounds develop redness, swelling, or drainage

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